

Only Parents by birbsandemidogs04

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M

Language: English

Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers & Will Byers, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Will Byers & Eleven

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-12-27

Updated: 2017-12-27

Packaged: 2022-04-03 15:03:29

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,639

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Hey all!

I came out of series two of this show definitely thinking Joyce and Hop could have at least kissed, but I guess the producers would have us (and David) wait.

So I made this right after I finished the series to satisfy my ship needs, lol.

That being said, I do not decide how the show goes, so we can only hope series three brings with it canon Jopper.

Enjoy and thanks for reading in the meantime :)

Only Parents

Author's Note:

Hey all!

I came out of series two of this show definitely thinking Joyce and Hop could have at least kissed, but I guess the producers would have us (and David) wait.

So I made this right after I finished the series to satisfy my ship needs, lol.

That being said, I do not decide how the show goes, so we can only hope series three brings with it canon Jopper.

Enjoy and thanks for reading in the meantime :)

It's Christmas Eve in Hawkins, and all the kids are aflutter.

The teenagers are less than aflutter, but still a little because of their own Christmas parties and dances.

The adults are even less aflutter. In fact, they're aflutter for all the wrong reasons.

Joyce Byers is excited but mostly nervous. Jim Hopper is the same. Both have a child they need to protect at all times, and said children both want to be set free for this one night.

"Please, Mom," says Will. He looks almost guilty as he pleads with her - he knows how exhausted she is, after all.

"It's just one night." promises Jane, right to Hopper's grimacing face as he carefully positions his hand on the thin brim of his hat. "I'll be with Mike."

"And Mike's mother will be there the whole time? She won't leave to go out, or anything?" Joyce asks, her eyes seeming to acquire more

bags when the words come out her cracked lips. She doesn't care much for Ted Wheeler to look after the kids - she knows he's as useless a father as he is a husband - but Karen, she can trust. After all, weren't they somewhat friends in high school?

Will nods. "Yeah, Mom. She's staying there the whole time."

Hopper still isn't happy. "I'm still not happy," he grumbles. "I don't know why I'm letting you do this. I hope you know that."

Jane grins. She knows now that Hopper's sarcasm and humour have no distinction.

"Well," Joyce sighs, "I guess one night... but no going anywhere by yourself, alright? Not even to the bathroom."

Will's ears go crimson. "Mom!"

"I'm serious, Will. If you have to go anywhere, take Mike or someone else. I would prefer either Jane or Mike. Unless it's the bathroom. Then Mike."

"Mom. I'll be fine."

"And no scary movies. Try to sleep tonight, baby. You're so tired - I can see it in your face."

Will walks close to his mother and rests his head against her chest. "I'm okay," he tells her, even though she'll still worry. Even though she hates leaving him alone, even if it's with the Wheelers, whom she feels she can trust.

Even then.

She pulls her boy into a tight hug without hesitation and kisses the top of his head. When she catches the scent of his hair, he still smells like a newborn baby, the newborn preemie she cradled for hours after labour just staring at him. Her baby.

It's too soon, but she thinks she can manage.

"Thanks, Mom." says Will.

"Thank you, Papa," smiles Jane.

...

Hopper pulls up across the street from Mike's house, and promptly gets out of the car to make sure his daughter gets across the road safely. Jane frowns.

"Papa." she complains.

Hopper frowns at her. "Hey, whine at me all you want. I'm still going to make sure you cross the street alright. Don't get all bent out of shape."

When he's at the Wheeler's door, he hesitates before knocking. He turns to Jane and looks down at her. "You'll call me if you have any problems, right? We've established that."

Jane nods obediently. "Yes."

"And never go anywhere, even in the house, on your own."

"Got it. What about -"

"The bathroom? I dunno, hold it, or take the Hargrove girl, whatever. Just don't go be stupid and go anywhere by yourself."

Jane huffs. She still doesn't particularly like Max, but she'll have to make do. "Okay. Can you leave now?"

Hopper grins, a shine in his eye. "Picking up your old man's attitude? I'm so proud."

Jane sighs, a warning. One of Hopper's car windows cracks.

"Okay, okay, I'm leaving," yelps the Chief. "Have a good time, and all that. I'll call in the morning. Be ready to leave by 11!"

~

During Jane and Hopper's speech, Joyce Byers pulls up to the Wheeler house with Will in the back.

"Wow, look - Hopper and Jane are already here!" Will cries in excitement.

Joyce smiles fondly.

"Alright, sweetheart, are we ready?"

Will nods. "Are you, Mom?"

Joyce stops. It's a good question. Is she?

"I think so, yes." she lies. Of course, she'll never be ready for anything.

Will starts to open the door to go into Mike's house, and Joyce, seeing she had to let him go, kisses his cheek and bids him farewell. She stays for a couple of minutes after that.

Just as she's about to leave, she hears a tap on her window and there's Jim Hopper. She unlocks the car door and he gets in, smoking a Camel already.

He offers her one, to which she politely declines. "I'm not choking on that again."

Hopper chuckles. "It's not that bad. You get used to it."

Here she laughs lightly. "You might've gotten used to it, Hop. Not me. I'm sticking to my regular, boring ones."

True to her word, she reaches into the glove compartment and brushes her shoulder with his in grabbing one of her own cigarettes. She cranks open the window before lighting, blowing a puff out into the night afterwards.

Hopper side-eyes her while he sucks on his Camel and sighs heavily, as if all weight has fallen from his shoulders. "Do you ever feel like you have no idea what the hell you're doing?"

Joyce instantly knows what he's talking about. "God... yes, Hop, all the time. It's not like they damn well give you parenting classes."

He nods, and though Joyce's head is inclined towards the window, she knows.

"I'm havin' to follow her everywhere," he says in a quiet but rumbling voice, full of the phelgm of no sleep. "She's sick of it, and so'm I, but I have to, you know. I can't lose her. Not again. I already went through the fuckin grief thing with - I can't do it again."

Joyce registers the lowered tone as he narrowly avoids uttering his dead daughter's name. She turns to look at him, and taps her cigarette on the edge of her ashtray. "I've always been overprotective of Will... you know that -"

Hopper grins, recalling the amount of times, even before Will's involvement in the UpsideDown, that Joyce would call the school and sometimes even the police in order to know if her son had gotten safely to school. The school bus became something that Will hated, leading to him requesting a bike before his tenth birthday. He told Joyce it was because Mike and the others each had one, but she knew the real reason why, and she didn't blame him. She still doesn't.

"- um, but now I feel like I have to be awake all night just to feel like he's safe. I mean, no offense, but without you, the Hawkins Police Department is absolute shit when it comes to actual crimes."

"Yeah, no. That wasn't offensive at all. It's still absolute shit, even with me in it." he chuckles dryly in response.

Joyce shrugs. "So, I need to keep tabs on him at all times because I'm the only one who would care if he vanished again. Well, me, Jonathan, his friends... you get the gist."

"I don't think I could handle Will being in danger again either," grunts Hopper, coughing. "P... poor kid's been used by that son of a bitch way too many times."

In that moment, he wishes he could confess, "If I had sons, I'd want them to be exactly like Will and Jonathan," but he hangs back. She doesn't need to know that now.

Joyce taps the cig again. "He likes you a lot, too." she smiles. "You're in his drawings lately. I come into his room and find him scribbling family portraits - him, his friends, Eleven, you an' me... he hangs them all around his bed."

Hopper doesn't exactly know how to react to this adorable news, so he just grins and takes in another puff of smoke. "He's a good kid. I like his drawings, too."

Joyce nods. "That's more than Lonnie did." falls out of her mouth before she can stop it.

Hopper's grin grows dim and his fists curl. That piece of shit excuse for a human being. "Lonnie can go to hell, as far as I'm concerned." he grunts. He remembers how satisfying it had felt to smash Lonnie Byers' head into the bar table where it belonged.

This waste of space, who had called his own child a fag before he even knew what it meant. This monster, who had caused his oldest son to have PTSD. This bastard, who never pays money for his kids, never lightens Joyce's load. He never even cared when Will was presumed dead, never dropped by to see how Joyce was doing.

Hopper grows so angry with these thoughts of Lonnie in his head, that he crushes his Camel between his fingers.

Joyce sees this, and stays quiet, only reaching across to unbuckle her seat belt. Then she leans over the armrest and touches his grisdled cheek in her hand. He softens, slumping as he looks at her.

Still saying nothing except for her eyes, where light from the street lamps dances, she moves closer and kisses his lips, having to reach her face up just a touch to get to him. It's slightly uncomfortable and her body twists and bumps into the back of her seat, but Hopper does his best to hold her steady.

It's a short, gentle, sweet kiss unlike all those they had shared in high school during their fling. No, this is one full of so many mutual sentiments, and it's even better than high school, where there were no sentiments, only tongue.

They go on smoking after that, after Joyce settles back into her seat and gets another cigarette, and they're just comfortable in each other's silence for awhile, not thinking.

It's nice.

